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301735Z Sep 05

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 009305

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR WHA, WHA/CCA AND PRM/A

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREF CU CO

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN PAROLE FOR THREE CUBAN NATIONALS

REF: HOEY-WHA/CCA EMAILS

1. (U) This is an action message. Please see paragraph 7.

2. (SBU) Embassy was contacted by Ms. Liduine Zumpolle, a Dutch national who works with the pro-democracy NGO "Cuba Futuro" about the case of three Cuban nationals who worked in harsh conditions in a shipyard in Curacao. Zumpolle said the men (Fernando ALONSO HERNANDEZ, Luis Alberto CASANOVA TOLEDO and Alberto RODRIGUEZ LICEA) denounced the Castro regime in the Dutch and French press because of the way they were treated in Curacao and fled to Colombia. Colombian labor activist Jose Leon Ramirez (Colombian Workers Federation - CTC) is also interested in the case and has been assisting the men who are living temporarily in Cartagena. All three want to resettle to the U.S. There are no refugee cases pending for any of the men with the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

3. (SBU) Alonso, Casanova and Rodriguez were sent to Curacao in 2004 to work in the dry dock to repay a debt the Cuban Government owed to Curacao. All of the men had been employed by the national shipyard company (Empresa Nacional de Astillero de Cuba) in Cuba. They reported that while working in Curacao, they were not given proper food, worked extremely long hours in unsafe conditions, and did not receive the compensation they were promised. The men stated that they were forced to work 14-15 hours a day, 10-15 days in a row without any time off. Because of the intolerable conditions, they left their jobs in Curacao and denounced Castro and the Cuban Government because of the way they were treated by the Cuban Government. Their passports were retained by a member of the Cuban security agency, Rosana Grau. The men claim that Ms. Grau hired a private Venezuelan security company (Panamericana) to find them "dead or alive." After leaving Curacao, the men made their way to western Venezuela and then to Cartagena, Colombia.

4. (SBU) Prospects for Local Integration: Embassy understands the Colombian Government has approved the request for refugee status in Colombia but has not yet officially notified the three men. The men have changed apartments several times because of the concern that Cuban Government teachers, who are on an official mission in Sucre Department, may be looking for them. The men claim that a strange man came to their apartment in early July asking for "the three Cubans." The men moved to another building shortly afterwards. Representatives of the Catholic Church's social outreach agency visited the Cubans on July 19, 2005 and reported to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees that they did not complain of any problems. When asked about this, the Cubans said they were afraid to tell the representative from the Church.

5. (SBU) Prospects for Employment/Financial Support in the U.S.: The men stated that they made friends with Americans in Curacao who will offer them work in Miami. They note that World Shipping Management Corporation<sup>8</sup> has offered them employment. They added that their families would help them when they got to the U.S., and would also assist Mr. Rodriguez Licea who does not have family in the U.S.

6. (SBU) Current Address and Biographic Information: Diagonal 32, 71-49, Barrio Los Cerezos, Cerca de la bomba El Gallo, Cartagena, Colombia. Cellular Telephone: 315 650-9505

ALONSO HERNANDEZ, Fernando  
DPOB 09NOV65 Maria Navo, Cuba  
Profession: Technician in ship construction  
20 years experience.  
Left Dry dock in Curacao on January 7, 2005

Relatives in U.S.  
Father: ALONSO, Eduardo Luis  
411 SW 6th Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134  
Cell phone 786 263-3734

Brother: ALONSO HERNANDEZ, Eduardo  
185 NW 13th Avenue, #830, Miami Florida

Telephone: 305 244-7981

CASANOVA TOLEDO, Luis Alberto  
DPOB: 12Dec78, Havana, Cuba  
Profession: Technician in Naval ship construction  
20 years experience as a solderer.  
Left Dry dock in Curacao January 7, 2005

Relatives in U.S.  
Sister: CASANOVA TOLEDO, Liliana de los Angeles  
4539 West Henry Avenue, Tampa Florida, 33614  
Telephone: 813 391-7498 813 391-5491

RODRIGUEZ LICEA, Alberto Justo  
DPOB 25Jun65, Havana, Cuba  
Profession: Technician in naval ship construction. 15 years  
experience.  
Left Dry dock in Curacao October 9, 2004

Relatives in U.S.  
None. Relatives of Mr. Casanova and Mr. Alonso have sent an  
affidavit of support for Mr. Rodriguez Licea to Senator Mel  
Martinez' office.

17. (SBU) Given that the three men have publicly denounced the  
Castro regime, have no ties in Colombia, and that two of them  
have immediate relatives in the U.S., Embassy Bogota  
recommends humanitarian parole for this group.

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